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TAGS: MARR MOPS NATO PREL EI

SUBJECT: INFORMING ISAF PARTNERS OF POTENTIAL CHANGES TO U.S. SOF POSTURE IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. STATE 18868

¶B. DUBLIN 73

Classified By: Pol/Econ Section Chief Ted Pierce;
Reasons 1.4 (A) and (B).

¶1. (C) POLOFF delivered demarche on March 3 to Isolde Moylan, Director, Asia and Oceania Division, Department of Foreign Affairs. Moylan reiterated the full support of the Government of Ireland for the USG policy review on Afghanistan and expressed appreciation for the briefing on SOF plans. (Note: Ireland is an ISAF partner, but not a member of NATO. It has assigned seven troops to HQISAF through the Partnership for Peace program. Since 2005, Irish Aid has allocated over euro 16 million (USD 20.2 million) to Afghanistan in relief, recovery, and development assistance. End note.)

¶2. (C) In responding further to the invitation to comment on the policy review (Ref B), Moylan added one observation made by the Government of Ireland. She said that discussions with Irish NGO personnel working in the field in Afghanistan have revealed deep NGO concerns that insurgents in Afghanistan are increasing unable to differentiate between combat personnel and NGO workers, which puts the NGO workers at enhanced risk of attack. Part of the reason for this, she said, was that combat troops are engaged in development and reconstruction activities, seriously blurring the line (in the eyes of Afghans) between military and civilian personnel. PRTs, she stated, contribute to such blurring. Anecdotally, she noted that some Irish aid workers say they feel safer when widely separated from troops because their role as civilian humanitarian workers is more clearly perceived by the Afghans. Moylan suggested that PRTs should be civilianized as soon as possible.

FAUCHER